

# “OPEN AIR SCHOOL” – A “NEW” SPACE FOR EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM AND LIFE REFORM IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA (SUDETEN GERMAN AND CZECH EXAMPLES)

*«Escuelas al aire libre» - Un «nuevo» espacio para la reforma educativa y la vuelta a la naturaleza en el período de entreguerras en Checoslovaquia (ejemplos de los Sudetes alemanes y checos)*


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**Abstract.** The study analyses two examples of so-called open air schools in Czechoslovakia in the interwar period – a Czech and a Sudeten German example of “new education”. The article presents selected examples of school reform as a place of “new education” and analyses their architecture with regard to the educational concept, the problem of education of the “new man” within the framework of life reform and with regard to the architectural conception and arrangement of the space intended for learning. The text analyses both the “external” form of the school building and the “internal” architecture of the educational thinking of the main protagonists of both school reform examples – Eduard Štorch and Karl Metzner. The analysis of the examples of school reform is carried out in the socio-political context of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period and in the context of the efforts to reform the school architecture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the interwar period in Central Europe.

**Keywords:** progressive education; school reform, life reform; Czechoslovakia; open air school; school architecture.

**Resumen.** *El estudio analiza dos ejemplos de las llamadas escuelas al aire libre en Checoslovaquia en el período de entreguerras —un ejemplo checo de la*

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«nueva educación» y otro de los Sudetes alemanes. El artículo presenta dos ejemplos seleccionados de reforma de la escuela como un lugar de la «nueva educación» y analiza su arquitectura en relación con el concepto de educación, el problema de la educación del «nuevo hombre» en el marco del movimiento de vuelta a la naturaleza, y la concepción y disposición arquitectónica del espacio destinado a la enseñanza. El texto analiza tanto la forma «externa» del edificio escolar como la arquitectura «interna» del pensamiento educativo de los principales protagonistas de ambos ejemplos de reforma escolar: Eduard Štorch y Karl Metzner. Dicho análisis se lleva a cabo en el contexto sociopolítico de Checoslovaquia durante el periodo de entreguerras y de los esfuerzos de reforma de la arquitectura escolar en los primeros años del siglo XX y en el período de entreguerras en Europa Central.

**Palabras clave:** educación progresiva; reforma escolar; Movimiento de vuelta a la naturaleza; Checoslovaquia; escuelas al aire libre; arquitectura escolar.

## INTRODUCTION

To thematize the issue of the place of “new education” in the interwar period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century means to deal with the ideas of the “external form of the new school”, which are mainly the result of concrete educational principles and social reformist efforts in the discussion about the “new man”.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore obvious that the place for reforming the “new man” – school – will be construed very differently within the discussion on the reform of education and the reform of society by individual advocates of the “new school”, depending on their ideas on the reform of social, societal and cultural life.

In the following study we will examine how the idea of the “new school” (open air schools),<sup>2</sup> i.e., the place of the school reform, was

<sup>1</sup> *Die Lebensreform: Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900* [The Life Reform: Proposals for the Reorganisation of Life and Art around 1900], ed. Kai Buchholz (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2001), and *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880-1933* [Handbook of German Reform Movements 1880-1933], eds. Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke (Wuppertal: Hammer Verlag, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> *L'école de Plein Air: une expérience pédagogique et architecturale dans l'Europe du XXe siècle = Open Air Schools: An Educational and Architectural Venture in Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Anne-Marie Châtelet and Andrew Saint (Paris: Éd. Recherches, 2003).

construed with regard to the broader principles of progressive education and social reformist requirements of selected "creators of the new school". In our opinion, such place is not determined "only" by material and visual criteria, but mainly socially, environmentally, culturally<sup>3</sup> and mentally<sup>4</sup> – that is, as a space representing cultural, educational, social, but also political ideas of those who design such place and create it, inhabit it, change it and identify with it.<sup>5</sup> The place embodies the meanings attributed to it by the protagonists, which it should fulfill. The place of the "new school" is a space for the realization of certain intentions, aims; it is a space where the principles of the school reform and cultural and social ideas about the reform of the "new man" are to be realized.<sup>6</sup> Therefore it can be assumed that its "architectural plan" will differ in the interwar period of multinational Czechoslovakia with regard to the national specifics of the protagonists, their socio-political background, their professional pedagogical anchoring and their "convictions" about the progressive education. We can also find differences in the social standing of pupils of individual schools. While Štorch educated pupils from the lower middle class who attended a regular lower school in Prague for a part of the school week as a school experiment, Metzner's school was a private grammar school and it was attended by upper middle class pupils of the German-speaking population from various cities. At Metzner's school, tuition had to be paid and the school did not have the right to award the same certificate as a public school.

The following study will reconstruct two selected places of the interwar school reform in Czechoslovakia. The first place will be the so-called school farm, whose pedagogical program and the "material form" were

<sup>3</sup> Martin Lawn and Ian Grosvenor, "Imagining a Project: Networks, Discourses and Spaces – Towards a New Archaeology of Urban Education", *Paedagogica Historica* 35, no. 2 (1999): 380-393.

<sup>4</sup> Theresa Richardson, "The Home as Educational Space: Bayonne Housing and the Architecture of Working Class Childhood, 1917-1940", *Paedagogica Historica* 36, no. 1 (2000): 299-337.

<sup>5</sup> *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education*, eds. Marc Depaepe and Bregt Henkens (Ghent: CSHP Paedagogica Historica Supplementary Series 6, 2000); Catherine Burke, Peter Cunningham & Ian Grosvenor, "Putting education in its place: space, place and materialities in the history of education", *History of Education* 39, no. 6 (2010): 677-680.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Mayer, "The experimental and community schools in Hamburg (1919-1933): an introduction", *Paedagogica Historica* 50, no. 5 (2014): 561-570, and Christine Mayer, "Circulation and internationalisation of pedagogical concepts and practices in the discourse of education: The Hamburg school reform experiment (1919-1933)", *Paedagogica Historica* 50, no. 5 (2014): 580-598.

formed by the Czech teacher Eduard Štorch (1878-1956). The second place is a unique example of the Sudeten German<sup>7</sup> reform boarding school and school community (*Landerziehungsheim, Schulgemeinde*), proposed by the Sudeten German educational reformer Karl Metzner (1880-1947), modeled after similarly oriented German experimental schools founded by Hermann Lietz or Gustav Wyneken.

## INTERWAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA – A “PLACE FOR NEW DEMOCRACY” AND THE “NEW SCHOOL”?

The young Czechoslovak state was confronted with many geopolitical difficulties. These were linked to its internal political tensions as well as complex relations with neighboring states. After the breakup of Austria-Hungary, there was only a very slow “straightening” of the relations with neighboring Germany, with the newly established Austria and also with Hungary. After 1918, Czechoslovakia did not have a common border with the USSR in the east, but its stance toward its existence and political order was very negative. Both dangerous expansive nationalism<sup>8</sup> and communist internationalism were seen by the Czechoslovak political representation as possible threats to the newly established state and as fundamental problems for a modern democracy, which wanted to build its future on civic equality and social, cultural and educational emancipation of its citizens of all nationalities.

It is necessary to point out that in multinational Czechoslovakia it was not easy to reach a consensus on the manner in which to achieve the democratic ideals. Because of its multinational makeup,<sup>9</sup> the “Switzerland of Central Europe” had difficulties in public life to find a key to seeking a political consensus and answers for the fundamental problems

<sup>7</sup> The term Sudeten German denotes the population in the Czech lands of Austria-Hungary, later Czechoslovakia, claiming affiliation to German nationality and German culture.

<sup>8</sup> Uwe Puschner and Ulrich. G. Großmann, *Völkisch und national* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009) and Barbara Stambolis, *Der Mythos der Jugend. Ein Aspekt der politischen Kultur im 20. Jahrhundert* (Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> In Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, according to the 1921 census, the majority of the population were Czechs, a third were Germans, and on a small scale the population claimed affiliation to Jewish, Polish, Hungarian, or Russian nationality. In Slovakia, in addition to Slovaks there was a large group of Hungarians; similarly in Carpathian Ruthenia, there were Jews, Ruthenians, Hungarians and only a few Czechs and Slovaks.

of the young democracy. In many respects, the wider social and political discussion was burdened with the legacy of the "national" quarrels and contradictions of the prewar era,<sup>10</sup> which determined the "reading" of many problems of political life after 1918 and burdened the relations between individual nationalities of the common state.<sup>11</sup> In Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the public discussion was determined mainly by the dynamics given by the complicated relations of Czech-German coexistence,<sup>12</sup> characterized by many stereotypes in the perception of the other one and the "alien" which had developed in the discourse during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and also before the First World War.<sup>13</sup>

It is obvious that the school question was of fundamental importance in the newly established Czechoslovakia in the national competition between Czechs and Sudeten Germans.<sup>14</sup> Both nationalities viewed school as an instrument for developing their national identity.<sup>15</sup> The national question thus burdened the otherwise identical or similar pedagogical goals of Czech and Sudeten German teachers in the reform of the school system.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Haslinger, *Nation und Territorium im tschechischen politischen Diskurs: 1880-1938* (München: Oldenbourg, 2010); Pieter M. Judson and Marscha M. Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Tomáš Kasper, "The Sudetendeutsche Jugendgemeinschaft: the ideological and organisational platform of the Sudeten German youth movement and its means to create the *Sudetendeutsche Volksgemeinschaft*", *Paedagogica Historica* (2019), in press; Tomáš Kasper, "Die deutsche Jugendbewegung in der Tschechoslowakei 1918-1933", in *Jugend in der Tschechoslowakei. Konzepte und Lebenswelten 1918-1989*, eds. Christianne Brenner, Karl Braun and Tomáš Kasper (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2015), 25-59.

<sup>11</sup> The following study deals with the comparison of the "new school architecture" on the Czech and Sudeten German side in the Czech lands of the then Czechoslovakia. The little attention is paid to the situation in Slovakia and in the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia – Carpathian Ruthenia.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft* (München: Oldenbourg, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Hans Henning Hahn, "Nationale Stereotypen", en *Stereotyp, Identität und Geschichte. Die Funktion von Stereotypen in gesellschaftlichen Diskursen*, ed. Hans Henning Hahn (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2002), 17-56, and Michael Imhof, "Stereotypen und Diskursanalyse", in *Stereotyp, Identität und Geschichte. Die Funktion von Stereotypen in gesellschaftlichen Diskursen*, ed. Hans Henning Hahn (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2002), 57-72.

<sup>14</sup> *The nationalization of scientific knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848-1918*, eds. Mitchell G. Ash and Jan J. Surman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperová, "National, state and civic education in the Czech lands of Austro-Hungarian Empire in Czechoslovakia after 1918", *History of Education and Children's Literature* 10, no. 1 (2015): 251-278.

## THE “NEW SCHOOL” IN THE CZECH AND SUDETEN GERMAN PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSION

After 1918, the new state did not represent a major divide in educational discussion. As in many European countries, in the Czech and Sudeten German pedagogical discussion after 1918 we can observe a considerable continuity of the goals and principles of the school reform with the proposals concerning the reform of school and education at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The new geopolitical situation after 1918 allowed for a louder and more intensive articulation of these goals and principles, not their actual modification.

However, after 1918 clearly emerged different views on the “new school and new education” in the Czech<sup>16</sup> and Sudeten German discourse, but also different sociopolitical points of departure for the reform of society. Czech teachers journals emphasized the rejection of monarchist political organization of society and “its heritage” as opposed to the democratic models of public life administration; they also supported the belief in modern ways of life and above all the confidence in open-minded and free-thinking ideals, which the Czech educators adopted from their representation in the movement of *International Federation of Freethinkers*.<sup>17</sup> While the Czech pedagogical discussion<sup>18</sup> based the “new school” on concepts resulting from positivist-oriented pedagogical research and the recommendations arising from the empirically oriented child study (*Kinderforschung*),<sup>19</sup> the Sudeten German pedagogical discussion based its

<sup>16</sup> Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperová, “Development and Focus of Czech *Pädagogik* in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries”, in *Education and “Pädagogik” – Philosophical and Historical Reflections (Central, Southern and South-Eastern Europe)*, eds. Blanka Kudláčková and Andrej Rajscký (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019), 194-209.

<sup>17</sup> The Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Libre Pensée [International Federation of Societies of Freethinkers] with its headquarters in Brussels was founded in 1880. It had a strong branch in the Czech lands of the Habsburg monarchy, in which not only free intellectuals but also many teachers of lower schools were represented in high numbers.

<sup>18</sup> Tomáš Kasper, “Die wissenschaftliche Neuorientierung der tschechischen Pädagogik im Windschatten ihres amerikanischen Vorbildes – eine Zwischenkriegszeit Fallstudie”, in *1918: Bildungshistorische Blicke auf Traditionen, Transitionen, Visionen*, eds. Andreas Hoffmann-Ocon, Norbert Grube and Andrea deVincenti (Bad Heilbrunn : Klinkhardt, 2020), 135-158, and Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperová, “‘Nová škola’ v meziválečném Československu ve Zlíně – ideje , aktéři, místa [“New School” in the Interwar Czechoslovakia in Zlín – Ideas, Protagonists, Places] (Praha: Academia, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperová, “Exactness and Czech Pedagogy at the Break of the 19th and 20th Century”, *History of Education and Children's Literature* 12, no. 2 (2017): 343-358, and Marc



ideas concerning the "new school" on the results of the research only partially and soon abandoned this path in favor of culturally critical and pessimistic ideas regarding the civilization of the so-called life reform (*Lebensreform*) and idealistically oriented and speculative principles of the education of the "new man".<sup>20</sup> Sudeten German teachers tended to develop notions of harmonious and socially and nationally united community (*Gemeinschaft*), which was supposed to be inherent in "German culture" as opposed to models of modern society (*Gesellschaft*, *Zivilisation*). Nevertheless, the Sudeten German camp also managed to develop an empirically oriented pedagogical research at the German University in Prague.<sup>21</sup>

## REFORM OF THE SCHOOL AT THE TURN OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES – DEMONSTRATION OF POLITICAL POWER, ORDER AND DISCIPLINING OF PUPIL AS WELL AS TEACHER

The path to modern school was set in the Habsburg monarchy by the liberal Education Act of 1869, which was followed by many regulations in the sphere of construction of school buildings and the question of founding of schools. The legislation and economic boom of the monarchy at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries enabled to change the face of Czech towns, where "school palaces" were built, demonstrating both the economic prowess of the era and above all the importance ascribed to education (primary and secondary) in the liberal era of the Austro-Hungarian constitutional monarchy. The "school palaces" demonstrated the strength, the power of education,<sup>22</sup> embodying the solid social order of the Habsburg monarchy at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>

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Depaepe, *Zum Wohl des Kindes? : Pädologie, pädagogische Psychologie und experimentelle Pädagogik in Europa und den USA, 1890-1940* (Weinheim: Studienverlag, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> Ehrenhard Skiera, *Reformpädagogik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: eine kritische Einführung* (München: Oldenbourg, 2010) and Jürgen Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik: Entstehungsgeschichten einer internationalen Bewegung* (Zug: Klett und Balmer, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> The Sudeten German empirically oriented research was developed mainly by the associate professor of the German University in Prague, Wenzel Weigel (1888-1979), who studied, among others, in Hamburg under W. Stern. The efforts of the Sudeten German "founder of so-called descriptive pedagogy" as well as the associate professor of the German University in Prague – Rudolf Lochner (1895-1978), who developed quantitatively focused research, were also significant.

<sup>22</sup> Marcelo Caruso, *Biopolitik im Klassenzimmer: zur Ordnung der Führungspraktiken in den Bayerischen Volksschulen (1869-1918)* (Weinheim-Berlin-Basel: Beltz, 2003).

centuries, social hierarchy and the “unshakable” values and norms of the society at that time. They were also a manifestation of the strength of the “national life” of Czechs and Germans in the Czech lands of the Habsburg monarchy, but also of their national rivalry in the educational and cultural field.

Above all, however, school buildings built after 1869 in the “reform spirit” were to take into account the new requirements of school hygiene and school health issues.<sup>23</sup> Schools were to include, in addition to the classrooms, special subject classrooms, cabinets for plenty of visual aids, paintings, taxidermy, etc. and in particular a gym for compulsory physical education, an outdoor playground and a school garden. School buildings in the villages were simpler, but they also had to comply with health and school hygiene requirements.<sup>24</sup> A quite different chapter consisted of school benches,<sup>25</sup> which were supposed to prevent the pupils from hunching, and their height, inclination and overall distribution were to make it possible for the pupil to sit upright. On the other hand, it was a space that sufficiently disciplined the pupil and “settled him or her down” to prevent him or her from doing other tasks than ones foreseen within the school instruction (or at least make it more difficult

<sup>23</sup> The school buildings were designed and built to provide enough space for individual pupils (given the fact that the law allowed up to 70 pupils in one class in grammar school), plenty of fresh air, plenty of daylight (the requirement of having large windows on the left wall of the classroom), meeting hygiene standards (separate flush toilets using water; the slowly applied requirement for having cloakrooms separate from the classroom). The minimum area for each pupil (min. 0.6 square meter per pupil) and the ceiling height were established, the dimensions of buildings were subject to a norm for a sufficient supply of fresh air (simple, fast and suitable ventilation of premises and buildings). Schools (especially in cities) had premises for practical instruction for boys (workshops) and for girls (premises for girls' work) and a school kitchen for boys and girls. The choice of location for the construction of the school building in the countryside and in the city was also crucial. On the one hand, it was to be a strategic location, easily accessible to most pupils, but more important was the safety of pupils. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, schools were to be built aside from busy streets and with sufficient space for a school garden and a front garden. The school surroundings should have been safe for pupils, it was to be healthy and clean. See Jan Šimek, *Historie školních budov* [The History of School Buildings] (Praha: NPMK, 2016), 79-207.

<sup>24</sup> In the villages, there were to be mostly single-story buildings, raised as a minimum by 0.7 meters above the ground (because of isolation, classroom lighting and weakening the “bond” between the school and pupils with a space in front of the school building that could disturb them). As a rule, school buildings in the villages were complemented by a gymnasium, playground and sufficient space for a school garden. See Šimek, *Historie školních budov* [The History of School Buildings], 79-207.

<sup>25</sup> See Záhoř Jindřich and Lokay Emanuel, *Vývin otázky o školní lavici* [The Development of Questions about the School Bench] (Praha 1889).



coupled with the chance of being quickly spotted by the teacher). We can state that the Habsburg monarchy summed up the requirements of light, fresh air and sufficient lighting and hygiene into a set of requirements that had to be taken into account in the construction plans for each new school in order for the building to be approved and financed by the authorities. These requirements corresponded both to the hygienic and pedagogical discourse of that time – the style of teaching, the position of the pupil and the teacher in school, the discipline of the pupil during instruction and within the system of school upbringing. Unification and standardization was not reflected only in the effort of the state to plan the content of education, to publish *en masse* uniform textbooks, aids, school pictures, maps, atlases, etc., but also in classroom facilities, outer appearance of school buildings as well as their environment (gymnasium, school garden, front garden, the way to school).



Image 1. Grammar and secondary schools in Prague – the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## ARCHITECTURE OF THE “NEW SCHOOL” IN THE CZECH AND SUDETEN GERMAN PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSION

If we compare the architecture of school buildings at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and in the interwar period, we will find several similarities, but also differences. While the legal regulations on school hygiene remained the same as in the prewar period, the view on the processes of learning and school education and the requirements for “healthy education” changed greatly under the influence of the discussion on pedagogical reform.<sup>26</sup> Requirements for active school and progressive education, requirements for the performance of school democracy (i.e., holding common school meetings, meeting of pupils, teachers and parents, meeting of pupils and representatives of a wider community, meeting of the school parliament and class governments, as well as meetings of editorial boards of school magazines and the publication of school magazines, etc.) brought about new requirements for the internal organization of schools, the size of classrooms, the number of specialized classrooms, laboratories, spaces for school collections, aids, etc. The classrooms were conceived as workrooms or as rooms that allowed for the internal variations of furniture and equipment with regard to teaching in groups and learning by doing. Old solid wooden school benches were replaced by mobile desks creating places to enable studying, reading, but also discussion among the pupils and their active way of acquiring knowledge, solving educational problems and tasks.<sup>27</sup>

The discussion on the architecture of the “new school” was conducted both in the professional circles of architects<sup>28</sup> and on the pages of educational journals and among reform-oriented teachers.<sup>29</sup> In the workrooms, the pupils themselves were supposed to experiment, measure, compare, verify, write, model, etc. The school’s educational space (the term “school classroom” ceased to be used) and the workrooms were supposed to allow for the

<sup>26</sup> The gymnasium was supposed to be equipped with showers, especially in multi-class schools or town schools. In reform schools, there was also a space planned for school physicians.

<sup>27</sup> Václav Příhoda, *Architektonika moderní školy* [The Architectonics of Modern School Buildings] (Praha: Komenium, 1946).

<sup>28</sup> Emil Edgar, *Stavba a zařízení školy* [The Construction and Equipment of School Buildings] (Praha 1922). There was also a representative discussion led by architect Josef Polášek on the pages of the *Stavitel* magazine.

<sup>29</sup> Reform teachers discussed the new functions of the school on the pages of the following magazines: *Český učitel*, *Školské reformy* and *Tvořivá škola*.

individual work of the pupil as well as group teaching. In addition to work-rooms and workshops, the school should have a school kitchen, a reading room, a library, a natural sciences laboratory, an art room, a design room, a music education room and a central room or assembly hall for gatherings of pupils. Based on the experience gained from the reform of the interwar school, it was required that the cabinets and specialized classrooms gave way to the space for instruction where pupils would have at their disposal study literature and atlases as well as tools, models, paintings, etc.

With modern architectural “new” directions (Functionalism, Constructivism, Purism), the requirement for form to follow function intensified. The construction of the school building had to take into account its functionality, the fact that it should “serve” the educational purposes. The building should also meet higher requirements on school hygiene – larger windows and more intensive lighting of buildings, more hygienic heating and modern ventilation of buildings. It was easier to include all this in the construction of buildings thanks to new building materials and processes which made it possible. It should be noted, however, that the requirements for both the external appearance and the internal layout of the “new school” have not always been fully met in school buildings after 1918, and if so, it was more often in cities.



Image 2. A grammar school in Prague – the interwar period.





Image 3. A grammar and secondary school in the village – the interwar period.

### “SCHOOL IN NATURE – OPEN AIR SCHOOL” – THE WAY TO THE REVIVAL OF THE “NEW MAN”<sup>30</sup>

I teach at a school in the center of Prague. Neither I nor my pupils see a piece of grass or a tree on their way to school. We are surrounded by houses only, the houses reaching so high into the sky that the sun cannot shine on us. We live apart from nature, away from the natural way of life [...]. The school itself is a large three-story building with about 25 classrooms. It faces north and the sun does not get into the classrooms. The children are closed in here even when the sun is shining outside and the birds are singing. When I enter any school, I feel that we are committing a deadly sin on children. The school is like a prison.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The concept of Štorch's open air school has also been analyzed by Tomáš Kasper, “Eduard Štorch's New School as an Example of a School Reform Experiment in Interwar Czechoslovakia”, in *Hidden Stories – the Life Reform Movements and Art*, eds. Beatrix Vincze / Katalin Kempf, András Németh (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020), 159-175.

<sup>31</sup> Eduard Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm] (Praha: Dědictví Komenského [The Legacy of Comenius], 1929), 13.

The author of the quote is one of the promoters of the "open air schools" in the interwar Czechoslovakia, Eduard Štorch.<sup>32</sup> His criticism of old school buildings as unhealthy, unhygienic "dungeons" without gardens and playgrounds, without sanitary cloakrooms, showers and brightly lit rooms pointed out how the state suppressed the "pupil's natural instinct" which drove him or her away from unhealthy school and teaching. Štorch called for an understanding of why pupils cut classes by walking in the countryside, staying on the playground or wandering in greenery and in the sun. At the same time, he pointed out how the "old school" destroyed natural forms of life and led to the degeneration of the health of the individual as well as that of society. Guided by the principles of the eugenics and the so-called eubiotic movement (eu = good; bios = life),<sup>33</sup> Štorch established his own model of school, which was to end the suffering of pupils in the torture chambers of school buildings and benches, learning the curriculum packed with too much content, one-sidedly overburdening the pupils' memory and partly their brains.

Another civilization critical voice was the "old school" of Karl Metzner,<sup>34</sup> a Sudeten German reformer seeking "national (i.e., Sudeten

<sup>32</sup> Eduard Štorch was not only a teacher but also a prominent promoter of scouting. He was also a very successful author of literature for young people. However, he devoted himself to his literary career especially in the latter half of his life and in it he drew from his rich experience with youth on his school farm. Štorch's adventure books for young people (especially for boys) became very popular after the Second World War, and they were later filmed.

<sup>33</sup> The Czech Eugenics Society was founded in 1915. The Czechoslovak Eubiotic Society was founded in 1924. The Czech eugenic and eubiotic movements were based on the assumption that mankind had lost its connection with the natural "way of life", which was found to be the cause of many diseases that were to endanger both the health of the individual and that of the collective, the social health. The "salvation" of society was to come not just from improving and "healing" the style of life, but also from promoting the appropriate human values. The solution was a "return to natural ways of life". For the representatives of the eubiotic movement, these included a semi-agricultural way of life and the emphasis on a firm and "healthy" bond of man and woman in marriage. Steering clear of alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy foods was a matter of fact, and immoral sexual behavior or free love were criticized. In the spirit of the "eugenic protection" of society, "unhealthy social influences" were to be eliminated to ensure "national health". The Czech eugenic and eubiotic discussion, however, rejected racial discourse and it understood the "healing of society" as an emancipatory reform movement given by the individual's learning path. Social reform was to be a matter of enlightenment, education and a return to a "natural" way of life. See Břetislav Foustka, *Slabí v lidské společnosti* [The Weak in Human Society] (Praha: Laichter, 1904); Břetislav Foustka, *Sociální politika. Socialismus a sociální hnutí* [Social Policy. Socialism and Social Movement] (Praha: E. Leschinger, 1911); and Stanislav Růžička, *Eubiotika* [Eubiotics]. (Bratislava: Academia, 1926).

<sup>34</sup> In 1927 Karl Metzner established the *Deutscher Arbeitskreis für Neugestaltung der Erziehung* [Sudeten German Workers' Association for New Education] in Czechoslovakia, which was part of the New Educational Fellowship (NEF), an international educational reform movement. Metzner

German) revival" (*sudetendeutsche Volkserneuerung*) through school reform: "Modern amenities and civilization comforts are not a prerequisite for cultural advancement. Many have seen that it is possible to lead a better and full-fledged life, even if it is to be led in a much simpler style, and it will be much healthier".<sup>35</sup> Both Metzner and Štorch demanded "recovery" of both the physical development of the individual (the question of healthy movement, food, housing, diet, etc.) as well as that of the community.<sup>36</sup> However, Metzner underlined the fact that his school is about the "existence and no-existence" of Sudeten Germans, their cultural and national rescue, a means of their (Sudeten German) national revival. Štorch repeated that his school represented the path to the individual as well as to social (collective) recovery.

In 1928 Karl Metzner founded his own private boarding school, a co-educated secondary community school (*Freie Schulgemeinde*)<sup>37</sup> in Litoměřice (in German Leitmeritz),<sup>38</sup> where he previously worked as a

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co-published a magazine presenting news and discussion about Sudeten German experimental schools (*Sudetendeutsche Schule* – Sudeten German School); he kept in touch not only with Elisabeth Rotten representing the NEF, but also with other German representatives of the New Education Fellowship. In the 1920s he undertook several study trips to Germany, Switzerland and England. His pedagogical role model were teachers developing the concept of the so-called reform boarding schools (*Landerziehungsheime*) – Cecil Reddie, Hermann Lietz and especially Gustav Wyneken. Karl Metzner was also an important figure in the Sudeten German Youth Movement; before and after the First World War he was in the forefront of Sudeten German nationally conservatively oriented groups of scouting. (*Deutschböhmischer Wandervogel and Sudetendeutscher Wandervogel*).

<sup>35</sup> Karl Metzner, "Wie die freie Schulgemeinschaft entstand", *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* (1932): 52.

<sup>36</sup> The following analysis of the educational reform models of Eduard Štorch and Karl Metzner is based on both archived and published sources. The archive estate documenting the pedagogical thinking and goals of the Karl Metzner Reform School is deposited in the District Archive in Litoměřice, having its seat in Lovosice. In part, Metzner's ideas and experience with his school reform model were published in the *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* school magazine. Štorch's educational efforts can be reconstructed based on published sources and reports on his reform model of the School Farm and his estate deposited in the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague.

<sup>37</sup> Karl Metzner's private school *Freie Schulgemeinde* was based on his rich educational experience. He was the founder of Sudeten German Scout Movement. In 1905 he founded the leisure-time rowing club Wiking for secondary school youth in Litoměřice, where he cultivated the general physical and mental fitness of adolescents, but also paid attention to their proper "moral development" and the development of their character in the spirit of national values and social reform goals. In 1921 he founded a secondary boarding school for students who were not residents of Litoměřice, where they lived during the week in order to attend school. Metzner's efforts were aimed at the weakening of the influence of the family, whose function he found insufficient. A dysfunctional family was to be replaced by his education of the "new man" in Litoměřice's youth home.

<sup>38</sup> The school educated pupils (boys and girls) aged 10-18. The pupils were educated in groups heterogeneous in terms of their age, and were divided into three age groups according to their



secondary school teacher. In 1933 he managed to build a new building and rent another building (villa) in the more distant city of Liberec (Reichenberg in German). The new building in Litoměřice included two classrooms, workshops, a chemistry workroom and a photo lab.<sup>39</sup> It was a villa with a large bedroom for pupils, showers and an apartment for the teacher. There were up to fourteen rooms in the villa near Liberec, which provided home facilities to the oldest age group. The villa was surrounded by a large park and the school was located practically in the middle of a forest and by the river, far away from the city.<sup>40</sup>



Image 4. Metzner's school building in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz).

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developmental and psychological characteristics. The first grade consisted of pupils aged 10 and 11; the second grade, 12-14 years; and the third grade, 15-18 years.

<sup>39</sup> Franz Habermann, "Der jetzige Stand der Siedlung", *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* (1934): 11.

<sup>40</sup> Karl Metzner, "Über unsere Schule", *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* (1934), 13.

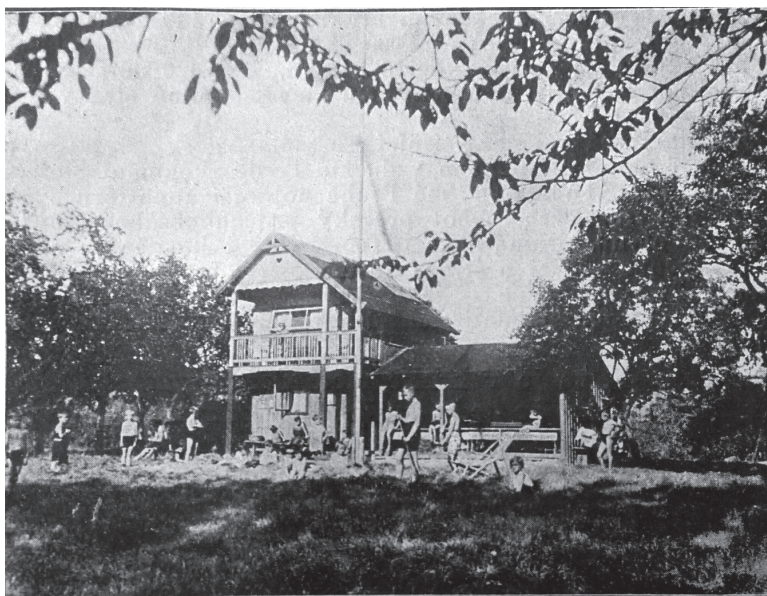


Image 5. Metzner's school building near Liberec (Reichenberg).

Eduard Štorch established the so-called Children's Farm (daily school camp / outdoor school), which he founded in 1926 on one of the islands of the Vltava River at a quiet and romantic outskirts of Prague. Štorch's Children's Farm was also an "open air school", and that determined its external appearance, layout and equipment. Štorch's school farm was attended by pupils aged from 10 to 14 years. Štorch's Children's Farm ended in 1933 because the land on which his school experiment took place was only leased and the lease was terminated.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Štorch established his experimental school for boys and girls within a Prague secondary school where he taught. The school was located in the very busy and "unhealthy" center of Prague. Štorch managed to win the approval of pupils' parents and the school authority and he was allowed to establish a school farm where the pupils spend three days a week. In winter, however, they returned to the school in the city of Prague. Instruction took place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the pupils otherwise lived with their families. In summer the pupils stayed at the farm until 8 p.m., sometimes later. They walked 40 minutes to Prague where they lived.





Obr. 6. Dětská farma na libeňském ostrově

Image 6. Štorch's Children's Farm.



Obr. 4. Dětská farma — zelená oasa.

Image 7. Štorch's Children's Farm.

Both Metzner and Štorch rejected the architecture of “school palaces”, criticizing their unhealthy buildings, the lack of adjacent gardens, greenery and playgrounds, but also the “barracks-like” way of dealing with pupils and instruction that denied the multifaceted and natural development of the child. They both called for the “liberation” of school. In the designs of the “new school” and in the reflections of both Metzner and Štorch concerning “new education”, the question of the place of education – that is, the site of the “school building” – comes to the fore (it needs to be emphasized that both avoid the expression “school building”). Following foreign models, Štorch spoke of pavilions open to nature and set in nature. When building his school farm, Štorch saw to it that the “school” area was large enough to include meadows, orchards, and access to the water (Vltava River).

Metzner wanted to develop a school community that would resemble a “healthy home environment”. He, too, set simple wooden buildings for boarding and teaching in a sufficient space so that pupils could stay near the city and yet in the countryside by the river (Elbe River). After he decided for the construction of a new building, he situated it in sufficient greenery. The villa with the surrounding area was built in the conservative style of architecture called *Heimatsstil*, and thus it resembled neither the typical school architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century nor the modernist architectural styles of the interwar period.

Štorch financed the school farm buildings mostly himself, using his own resources.<sup>42</sup> The rest of the money came from small donations from supporters, and a lot of work was done by parents and their children themselves. Similarly, Metzner mortgaged his new building, and after the annexation of the Czechoslovak borderland (Sudetenland) by Nazi Germany in 1938, when his school was closed down against his will, he was left with considerable debts.

As evidenced by historical photographs, Štorch’s idea of the learning setting was a simple wooden structure with open access to the surrounding countryside. In good weather, the pupils could study outdoors, in the

<sup>42</sup> He covered the construction costs from the sale of his archaeological collections of quite substantial value, as they contained finds from the prehistoric settlement of Prague. Štorch was a passionate archaeologist, though not a professional. In spite of that, he earned a considerable respect from the archaeological community and his findings were highly regarded by professional experts.

fresh air, in the light of the sun, and in the garden. A substantial part of the educational goals and tasks of pupils could be met by working (gardening, building, craft, etc.) in a large area belonging to the school farm. The school offered sufficient space for the pupil's natural movement (running, jumping, crawling, rope climbing, tree climbing, swimming, etc.) and for children's physical education games. It was similar in the case of Metzner's school building. Initially, Metzner purchased only temporary military structures discarded by the army. When designing his own building, he thought about the surroundings and the proximity of nature. Therefore the buildings did not have to be equipped by gyms because being outside all day in the natural environment was preferred, just like their several-week-long winter trips to the mountains in Czechoslovakia and long trips of the pupils (partly accompanied by their parents) in the summer (during holidays) to southern regions of Europe to the Adriatic Sea (mainly to the former Yugoslavia).<sup>43</sup>



Image 8. Štorch's pupils at the seaside in Yugoslavia.

<sup>43</sup> These trips to the sea were undertaken by Štorch, who ran into debt in order to help poor pupils and their parents to co-finance the trips.



Image 9. Healthy life by the sea – Štorch's pupils.

Both Štorch and Metzner were evidently convinced about the benefits to one's health of being in the mountains and by the seaside. On top of that Metzner tried to organize several-week-long trips abroad for older pupils to England, France and of course to Germany. Thus the school was not tied exclusively to one place, but instead it traveled together with its wandering pupils. The mobile nature of the school environment was essential for both representatives of the "open air school". Thus, the educational function of school did not end behind the closed doors of the "school building", as both Štorch and Metzner emphasized, but it was fulfilled in "natural" situations and interactions during trips to the near and distant surroundings of the school as well as to foreign countries and foreign cultures.

The union of the school with the surrounding environment and nature also played an essential role in the realization of educational goals. In Metzner's school, foreign languages were to be taught communicatively,



and an important role in language lessons was played by preparations for the long-term foreign trips described above. It was the several-week-long trip abroad that represented a "culmination" of foreign language teaching because the trip was largely prepared by the students who took part in the development of its concept as well as its management. The mother tongue – in case of Štorch's school, Czech, in Metzner's school, German – was developed in pupils in "natural" situations. Pupils were to have enough opportunities to write down, make sketches, describe the sketches, explain, record etc. Diaries, school magazines, sketches, descriptions, stories, chronicles and records represented the outputs of "mother tongue teaching". The places of instruction should therefore offer a significant number of situations that required pupils' natural communication skills and work with the language. Simultaneously, reading of texts as natural sources for understanding of situations and the world around was also an important part of the life in the school farm and in the community school.

The environment surrounding the school also determined the teaching of geography. The instruction was conceived mostly as observation and getting to know the near and far surroundings of the school. In the same way, history was presented in the form of topics and issues from cultural and social history. The aim was to understand the cultural-historical and socio-geographical aspects of the pupil's surroundings. Both Štorch and Metzner were not afraid that important educational content, in which the pupils would not show any interest or which would not be included in the pupils' learning about their "natural" surroundings, would remain "concealed" from them. Similarly to geography, the teaching of natural history and partly of physics was carried out in relation to the pupils' surrounding world. The natural environment itself provided educational content that was structured according to the questions and interests of the pupils. Interdisciplinary relationships were not to be artificially created, but:

In open air school, everything is concentrated on life in nature and all the subjects converge there. In open air schools, the natural concentration of the curriculum is given by the entire school environment, and the teacher does not have to pursue it in any special way. All what is needed is just to open your eyes and teach naturally.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm], 71.



Image 10. Štorch's pupils learning outdoors.

The teaching of individual subjects thus consisted of naturally formed periods of several hours. Metzner similarly abolished the timetable and replaced it by a system of five-week courses on a topic that interconnected several subjects. Pupils chose several courses as part of their weekly plan. "The aim of our school is one: to give to you, parents, your children undamaged and unbroken in soul and body. By its character, this school will have to be a seeking school if it wants to be a school close to life. It cannot be a systematic school".<sup>45</sup> Both Štorch's school farm and Metzner's community school (*Schulgemeinde*) also "taught" gardening and handicrafts with regard to the needs in life. They were a natural part of the lives of children in these types of schools. Children at Štorch's farm sawed, built, excavated, measured, joined, etc. Similarly, at Metzner's, the school workshops took care of the actual maintenance of the building and its surroundings.

<sup>45</sup> Karl Metzner, "Über unsere Bestrebungen", *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* (1933): 16-17.

Characteristic goals of these so-called schools in nature also determined the specifics of the schools' equipment. Both Štorch and Metzner have pointed out that it is not necessary to place too many teaching aids in the classroom because real objects are introduced to pupils in the natural course of school life on the farm or in the community school:

There is no need for big aids, bulky, heavy and expensive. Small ones are enough because the pupils are in a ball around the teacher and see everything close up. That is why geographical, natural sciences and other pictures on postcards and in books will serve us well. Many aids are made by children themselves. Many of the usual school aids are completely eliminated by being provided to us by nature. For example, it is not necessary to buy a stuffed blackbird or a picture of a chaffinch when they have their nests in each bush and hop on the table around our plates during lunch.<sup>46</sup>



Obr. 21. Hospodářství D. farmy. (Holoubci a hrdličky.)

Image 11. Štorch's pupils learn about nature.

<sup>46</sup> Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm], 67.



Obr. 39. Na jaře. (Žáci I. r. měšť. školy.)

Image 12. Štorch's pupils in the spring.



Obr. 40. Práce na záhonech. (II. r. měšť. školy.)

Image 13. Štorch's pupils doing gardening in summer.



All this led to the requirement that Metzner's and Štorch's schools in nature should offer sufficient teaching space for bad weather days, furnished with simple equipment, mobile desks and chairs and basic aids such as books. The essential thing was the space for active learning, the variability of the space for discussion and the fulfillment of tasks and solving of problems either individually or in groups. The space also should allow for grouping of pupils around their teacher, who would explain many topics, read text samples to the pupils or show or demonstrate many objects and phenomena.



Image 14. Karl Metzner and "his students" on the river in summer.

Physical education in Metzner's and Štorch's schools did have special gyms, as required by other school reformers of the time. Both Štorch and Metzner used instead the school environment, the training ground and playground at or near the school. An important part of the physical development was movement at the school farm or around the community school. Metzner gave importance to the entire afternoons, when depending on the weather and season his students went on long walks or hikes, ran, climbed, jumped, crawled, went on rock climbing expeditions,

rowed, paddled, swam or skated, skied, and so on. Likewise, the natural movement around the farm was preferred on Štorch's school farm.



Obr. 10. »Trosečníci.« (Plavíme stavební dříví na ostrov.)

Image 15. Štorch's pupils on the river.

The development of pupils' physical fitness and physical health was enhanced by their several-week-long stays in the open air and in the sun in winter as well as in summer. Sufficient movement, healthy food, plenty of fresh air and sun, cleanliness, hardening as well as rest and sleep were considered by both reformers to be the "guarantee" of health. There was also a school doctor at the school farm as well as at the community school, who not only checked the pupils' health, but also talked to teachers and consulted with them on the amount of schoolwork and workload suitable for each pupil with regard to his or her dispositions and physical as well as psychological development. His authority was unquestionable and indispensable for the "pedagogical success" of both projects, because the doctor checked whether the reform attempt was achieving its goal – improving the health of man and the nation.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> At Metzner's school, the physician checked the health of the youth every two weeks. A health card was issued for each pupil. Here, among other things, information on the state of health of family members and hereditary diseases was recorded.





Image 16. Karl Metzner and "his students" during an outdoor lesson.



Image 17. Karl Metzner and "his students" in the mountains in winter.



Obr. 34. Na kluzišti Dětské farmy.

Image 18. Štorch's pupils sledging at the Children's Farm.



Obr. 35. První lyžařská výprava pražské školní mládeže do hor. (Martinovka v Krkonoších, 1923.)

Image 19. Štorch's pupils skiing in the mountains.





Image 20. The group of students in Metzner's school after morning sports.

### "SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY" – THE WAY TO THE REVIVAL OF THE NATION OR A SOCIALIST COLLECTIVE?

We want the rejuvenation of Germany. Our space is the Czech lands. [...] Active cooperation of youth is intended to help to rejuvenate public life. We want to gain full strength, both moral and spiritual, for the service to Germanness.

With these words, after 1918, nationally conservative representatives of the *Böhmerlandbund* association, including Karl Metzner, called for the "rejuvenation" (*Volkserneuerung*)<sup>48</sup> of Sudeten German life in newly established Czechoslovakia, to which they took a very reserved attitude.

<sup>48</sup> See "Sudetendeutsche Jugendgemeinschaft", *Böhmerlandbuch* (1923): 162.

According to *Böhmerlandbund*, the school and youth associations were to follow up on the pre-war national education (*völkische Erziehung*) and in its spirit promote the “rescue” (*Volksrettung*) of Sudeten Germans. The concepts of education that were developed were often based on the cultural uniqueness of Germanness (*Deutschtum*) and on the pursuit of the purity of the German race (which means that they succumbed to anti-Semitism and anti-Slavic and particularly anti-Czech attitudes).

The Sudeten German national community (*Sudetendeutsche Volksgemeinschaft*), united regardless of social differences and politically different views as actively promoted by Metzner, was based on the idea of a united national power. However, it was not easy to achieve this goal in the real Sudeten German socio-political discourse. Therefore it was rather tempting to try to build such a community “on a small scale” – in the “new Sudeten German school”, which also included Metzner’s *Freie Schulgemeinde*. The situation changed after 1933, when a new political group emerged in Czechoslovakia, immediately becoming the strongest political force on the Sudeten German political scene – the *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront* (Sudeten German Homeland Front), promoting the idea of a national community based on conservative national ideals and anti-liberal ethos. A significant part of Sudeten German teachers oriented towards the reform of education could lean not only on activities of various associations of the Sudeten German unification movement, but also on this “new” political power represented in Parliament as well as in other lower echelons of political life in Czechoslovakia. It became the strongest political group representing Sudeten Germans, to which Karl Metzner also pledged allegiance as documented by his correspondence with his brother. In his letters, he describes Czechoslovakia as a “mask of democracy”<sup>49</sup> trying to “torment the Sudeten Germans to death”;<sup>50</sup> “I am in a perennial conflict with the government. All of us at school have joined the movement [i.e., *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront*, T.K.]”.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> State District Archives in Lovosice. Estate of Karl Metzner. Letters to his brother Wenzel Metzner in Opava.

<sup>50</sup> State District Archives in Lovosice. Estate of Karl Metzner. Letters to his brother Wenzel Metzner in Opava.

<sup>51</sup> State District Archives in Lovosice. Estate of Karl Metzner. Letters to his brother Wenzel Metzner in Opava.

According to Metzner, the school community was to be based on a teacher-leader: "The leader is a new teacher. The leader is characterized by a strong belief".<sup>52</sup> The teacher-leader was to be a person who would win the pupils by his friendly approach. The teacher-leader was to be voluntarily followed by the pupils (*Gefolgschaft*). Metzner had deputies who supervised the day-to-day life of pupils living in the boarding school. His deputies planned and controlled activities with pupils, took care of them in everyday contact, and therefore were essential for the operation of the school. However, it must be said – as it follows from Karl Metzner papers in the archives – the relations between the director Metzner and his teachers and wardens were rather tense. Metzner demanded obedience and discipline, and his ideas about the management of the school and pupils were not always accepted by others with total devotion, which made him very angry. He argued that the complete and absolute discipline and obedience was needed in order to realize his intention (the revival and reform of the national community). In *Freie Schulgemeinde*, the leadership of the teacher was to be supplemented by the pupils' self-government, where the powers of deputies and elected representatives were clearly defined and the self-government was largely hierarchized. On the one hand, Metzner in his articles and notes criticized the authority of the teacher in the "old school", pointing out detrimental effects on the pupil's personality caused by the authoritative approach of the teacher, and on the other hand it is not possible to say that the education at the *Freie Schulgemeinde* in Litoměřice was less authoritarian. This is also related to the relationship between the pupil's individuality and the whole community. For Metzner, the whole and the community were more important, and the individual person had to submit to it and live for it: "Everyone shall feel as a part of the greater whole. The whole is here for him, and by the same token he must serve the whole".<sup>53</sup> This explains Metzner's remarks that the teacher must always have a decisive say in solving all problems and that the pupils must always obey his authority.

<sup>52</sup> "Neue Schule – neue Lehrer", *Freie Schulgemeinschaft* (1930). In: State District Archives in Lovosice. Estate of Karl Metzner.

<sup>53</sup> Metzner's notes on school management. State District Archives in Lovosice. Estate of Karl Metzner.



Image 21. A group of students in Metzner's school.

Štorch also pursued the goal of making society healthier. The reform of the state, the nation and society was to be achieved by means of eubiotic principles. School (school farm) was seen as part of a “new” city, a residential colony applying the principles of the eubiotics. Štorch and other members of the Czechoslovak Eubiotic Society wanted to establish a settlement on the site of the school farm with houses forming a garden city. Štorch's school in nature was supposed to become its part. Although this goal was not achieved, Štorch viewed this community as a community of followers of the eubiotics, as a eubiotic cooperative. According to Štorch, eubiotic settlements and towns were to provide workers and peasants with a healthy life, implementing the principles of social reconciliation and social equality. Štorch considered schools in nature and eubiotic towns to be the only prophylaxis against disease and the proper prevention for society from “the ills of civilization”. He perceived such a community as a community of citizens of different political opinions, occupations, but of the same conviction of the positive importance of a healthy way of life.

Štorch – thinking along a strongly socialist vein – favored a healthy family as the foundation of society and as the best environment for the



child's growth and upbringing. Therefore he did not support boarding schools: "Education is a matter of family, of parents. The family is the foundation of everything".<sup>54</sup> Yet Štorch attributed important functions to the teacher and his wife. They were role models for pupils. For this reason, he asked the teacher and his family to become supporters of the eubiotic movement and abide entirely by its principles:

A good educator must have exemplary marital relations! [...] The teacher's educational duty does not stop at the doorstep of his house, but it gets inside. The teacher's wife has an important mission in raising children. She participates in educational school work. She allows the children to look into her household, her family life. She shows children how she cleans, bakes, cooks and sews. The teacher's family, with their beautiful harmony, cheerful atmosphere, warmth and mutual assistance is the most powerful educational factor that can ever affect children.<sup>55</sup>

Štorch idyllically and romantically described relationships in the school of the future – the open air school. The teacher must not be nervous or irritable. He should always be kind, eager to work with children; he should always be their companion at play and work and should be happy among children: "Education is successful where the educator gives himself entirely and devotedly to children".<sup>56</sup> Štorch did not state that in his school the pupils would take advantage of their freedom, that they would fundamentally break the rules of coexistence on the school farm, and that there would be any bigger conflicts. His reports speak only about active and joyful cohabitation in the "eubiotic school" without mentioning any problems.

Štorch's program was eubiotic school, eubiotic family and eubiotic society. The task was to convince the public about this programmatic recovery of society. According to Štorch, the ideal way to achieve that was to experiment – setting up of natural schools supported from public funds. However, it was not realized in the end. Štorch's experiment came to an end in 1933 because there was not enough land for founding a

<sup>54</sup> Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm], 27.

<sup>55</sup> Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm], 77.

<sup>56</sup> Štorch, *Dětská farma* [Children's Farm], 75.

eubiotic town. Štorch was also rather exhausted from this experiment, which led to his health problems and a nervous breakdown.

## CONCLUSION

In many ways, Metzner's and Štorch's schools seem to be a school experiment pursuing identical or similar aims. When taking a closer look at the social and socio-reform goals of both reformers within the context of socio-political discussion and with regard to the specifics of the Czech and Sudeten German discussion on pedagogical reform in the interwar Czechoslovakia, specific features of both attempts at pedagogical reform are coming to light in the external architecture of their schools as well as the internal "architecture of language and thought" of both reformers.

This is apparent in their notions of development. In Metzner's reflections, the purpose of *Freie Schulgemeinde* is to introduce pupils to the top levels of the development of culture based on the genuine Germanness, and at the same time he says: "Our school is the place where mankind will attain its highest stage of development". For Štorch, familiar with Herbert Spencer's pedagogy and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the notion of development also played an important role, but it was not goal-oriented and was not understood in a teleological way. Development was not directed toward a predetermined goal, but it was a process that could not end because it was understood as the "natural principle" of life. Development was to be examined in the variability of the individual's given personality and his or her external social conditions. Development was obviously the basis of permanent change, which is the foundation of life. In this respect, both pedagogical concepts of development – Czech and Sudeten German – were fundamentally different. This was also reflected in the pedagogical experiments themselves. While Štorch emphasized freedom at school, openness to nature which should be explored, freely experienced, examined and recognized, Metzner drew attention to the "inner harmony" and the integrity of the natural world, which was to be reflected by the school community.

I also find the concept of nature different with both reformers. While Štorch understood nature as a source of physical and mental recovery,

Metzner saw in nature a mystery that transcends man and determines the value definition of the “natural” – that is, the right life.

Last but not least, their pedagogical concepts of work differed as well. For Štorch, work balanced the exaggerated and one-sided demands on the intellectual development of an individual; it was a means of building man’s character (perseverance, resilience, diligence, creative approach to the outside world). The same goes for Metzner, in whose approach, however, work had significance for national revival. Metzner understood work as a typical manifestation of the culture of German man and a traditional means leading to the greatness of Germanness. Therefore, it should form the basis of the “return” to, and “revival” of the true Germanness, coming to the rescue of “endangered” Sudeten Germanness in Czechoslovakia at that time.

It is apparent that behind the similar concepts of pedagogical reform of the selected examples of “open air schools”, there were two considerably different pedagogical identities in the interwar pedagogical discussion in Czechoslovakia. The places of Czech and Sudeten German interwar school reform thus differed in their external architectural form and above all in the internal architecture of pedagogical thinking.

### **Note on the author**

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